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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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~ Classic Gaming Expo! ~ People Are Talking! ~ MagiC SDK News!
~ Aimster Suit Stays! ~ JagFest 2K1 Is Here! ~ AdMail Not Spam?!
~ CCAG 2001 Show Time! ~ AniPlayer Update! ~ Freelancers Win!
~ Napster Request Denied ~ Atari Users Net Poll! ~ Prevent Web Ads?!

-* Microsoft Split Order Turned *-
-* Internet Sales Tax Battle Continues *-
-* EarthLink Follows AOL's Lead, Raises Price *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Another beautiful week here in New England. A little humid at times, but it was tolerable overall. We'll definitely be in the pool this weekend, as it's going to be a scorcher weekend. Some last-minute cleaning should be done before some relatives pop by for a visit; and the pool should be ready!

The roses have bloomed, so it must be almost July! Wow, this year is flying by! It's nice to see the results of all my work over the spring come about. Plants and veggies are doing well. I have a few more plants to get in (darn mail order late deliveries!) and that will be it for this year, I think. Then maybe I can finish laying out the rest of the yard, even though a lot of the winter-damaged lawn is coming back. We'll see how that goes. Another vacation in a couple of weeks should take care of it, IF I can tear myself away from a few rounds of golf!

Not much happening otherwise. Microsoft dodged a major bullet this week, but I have a feeling that their troubles are not over yet. They may have avoided being split up, but I still see the "monopoly" problems causing some headaches. Napster is dying if the reports are true. Users have almost given up on them, and going elsewhere if possible. I still have mixed feelings about that whole scenario.

Remember that next week is the Fourth of July. For us yanks, it's a time for celebrating. Just remember to celebrate responsibly. Be careful with your fireworks if you've got 'em; and most importantly, don't drink and drive!

Until next time...

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Hi,

The latest version of Aniplayer is on my site.

Now it’s possible to save sound in MP3 or open AVI files with
video encoded in OpenDivX and audio track encoded in MP3.
The player uses 2 shared library from Unix library
libmp3lame 2.88 and libdivxdecode 0.4.7

Regards,

Didier.

--
Didier MEQUIGNON Aniplayer download: http://aniplay.atari.org
E-mail: didier.mequignon@wanadoo.fr http://perso.wanadoo.fr/didierm/
Address: 25,rue de l’Ascenseur 62510 Arques FRANCE
Atari FALCON 030/CT2B 46Mb 13Go HD ~ ZIP100 ~ CD-ROM10X ~ MODEM V90

[ES] Standalone SDK

After a few requests, we decided to make a SDK CD with the following:

> The GCC kit
> GCC Shell, registered version
> Resource Master, registered version, with paper manual
> Windom libraries with their printed documentation (200 pages)
> EZ Edit text editor (with syntax "colourisation")
> Many development libraries
> Many development tools

All this for only 49.00 Euros!

(reminder: for active developers the price remains 75.00 Euros for the
SDK including MagiC).

Have a look at the MagiC SDK page (in French):

http://www.europe-shareware.org/atari/logiciels/magic_sdk.html

Best regards,
P. Ricard (ES)
--
Europe Shareware http://www.europe-shareware.org

Initial Atari Port of PDAMaze Released

I just released my initial port of PDAMaze for atari GEM.

PDA Maze is a 1st person Maze game with pre rendered graphics. Created by
Bill Kendrick of Newbreed software. http://www.newbreedsoftware.com

The games graphics have been converted to xIMG format and made external,

so the end user can change them if desired.

There is a lot that still needs to be done, but it is playable at this stage.

The C source is included in the archive.

URL: http://www.netset.com/~baldrick/pdamaze.html

Qdialer .49 Released

Been awhile. Sorry about that. However I did get a couple of small things done. RSC location problem with Geneva should be gone. Window size being confused when a rolled up window is iconified should be fixed.

A few other small cleanups in the code.

Both a full package and a source archive are available at the stik2 web site.

http://www.netset.com/~baldrick/stikdl.html

Dan Ackerman

XaAES v0.914 Released

Hello there. A new version of XaAES

Done:

0 Internal reorganizations.
1 Improved behaviour of sliders. (no spurious redisplay in the file selector)
2 Improved behavior of some widgets when the mouse is released outside the widget.
3 Improvement in the use of the central Fselect. No bits are set in the mask for app's that are blocked. (form_do, form_alert and the like.)
4 Fix in objc_change. This repairs the drawing misfits in the menu of newer versions of LUNA.
5 Fix in button events. When the event falls through, the number of clicks was not reported in intout[6].
6 Fix in button events. The mouse lock was not accounted for.
7 Ongoing work on the event system. Events that fall through can now be combined. The same will be done for awaited events in the next version.
8 Fixed spurious redraws in disabled menu entries.
9 First attempt to use WDIALOG.
Very preliminary. It works only when started from the desktop.
And I only tried FONTNAME.APP. But it is a start :-)
9a I got FONTNAME.APP working by implementing rsrc_rcfix.
This might affect other programs that didn't yet start under XaAES.
10 Fixed a stupid bug in shell_write(7, ...) (broadcast message) which caused XaAES to loop forever.

Read the history file XAAES_9.TXT

Work on the event system goes on. Especially to be able to fall through on MU_BUTTON when the mouse is still down (or up). There are some complication that must be analyzed thoroughly.

Have fun!

--
Groeten; Regards.
Henk Robbers. mailto:h.robbers@chello.nl
http://members.ams.chello.nl/h.robbers/Home.html
A free multitasking GEM for MiNT: XaAES (heavily under construction);
http://xaaes.atari.org

Ez_edit & PcStudio Updated!

Updated versions with numerous bug fixes are available at

http://www.multimania.com/eazygem/index.htm

PCStudio is an integrated development environment for PureC.
Ez_edit is a text editor that works in conjunction with PCStudio."

STemBoy 3.25 Released

M. Jaap has taken over support for STemBoy. An updated version can be found at:

http://www.mypenguin.de/stemboy/

Changes include:
Long filename support
New Info dialog
New 3D look under Magic
Patches to color support
Return Key can be used as an alternative to right shift

Infogrames To Become Atari in the USA Confirmed!

MCV published an in-depth interview with Infogrames CEO Bruno Bonnell. The interview covers the firm’s U.S. structuring, product development and recent job losses among other issues.
Here are a few highlights from the interview:

Q: What are your definite plans for the Atari brand?

Bruno Bonnell: We gained the Atari name as part of the Hasbro deal and we like it a lot. It will become a major brand again, probably from October. We will use the Atari name on big games like Stuntman and the Unreal series. Hasbro used Atari as a classic arcade brand, but we’re going the other way. If Atari decided to launch as a company today, it wouldn’t do Pong, it would do a leading edge game.

Q: Could you really drop the Infogrames name altogether, making it just the holding company’s name?

Bruno Bonnell: Maybe, but clearly this is not green-lighted. And even if we did

do it, that wouldn’t be in the short-term.

For the full story.. visit MCV www.mvcusa.com

AUN Poll Results

What CPU would you like to see used in an Atari clone?

PPC	- 48.54 %	(50)
Coldfire	- 38.83 %	(40)
X86	- 8.74 %	(9)
Other	- 3.88 %	(4)

Total Votes: 103

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!

Last CCAG update

ATTENTION RETROGAMERS, COMPUTER COLLECTORS, VIDEO GAME FANATICS!!!!

WE’RE BACK!!..

CCAG 2001
(Classic Computer and Gaming 2001)

If you like collecting old computers, video games, and enjoy using them still, then come join us on:

June 30th, 2001
9AM till 6PM

National Guard Armory
IT’S ON ROUTE 57!!!

(actual address)
3520 Grove Avenue

Lorain, Ohio 44055-2048
(On Route 57, going North of I-90/Route 2)

IT’S FREE!

Both vendors and attendees!
Computer User Groups and vendors inside, flea market outside!

5,000 square feet of indoor space and an additional 5,000 square feet of outdoor space is available along with ample parking.

Setup: 29th, June, 2001
6PM-10PM

Please Call Ahead for Reservations:

Jim W. Krych jwkrych@n2net.net
440-979-9295

Fred M. Horvat fmh@netzero.net
440-286-2566

And these other CCAG 2001 organizers:
Thomas J. McLaren sirthomas@uk2.net

Please visit this site:

http://tomheroes.com/ccag.htm

Just a few days to go!!!

As of 06/24/2001

User Groups:
Erie PA Atari Group
TI Chips
Cleveland Classic Atari Group

Vendors:
1632 Systems-From the UK!!!
C.S. Vintage Games
L.R.O. Computers
Tomorrow’s Heroes
Retropolis
Songbird Productions
Video Game Connection
Ramcharged Computers

People/Organizations:
John Legg-From the UK!!!
Chuck Amicone
David S. Brain
Vince Briel
Harry Dodgson
Alan Hewston
Thomas Mclaren
Michael White(Bally/Astrocade)
Classic Gamer Magazine

John Litva

Special Guest!!!
Pitfall Harry

We are looking to do a "Classic Game Experience" this year!

One room is going to be set up for playing classic computer and video game cartoons and commercials. The other room is going to be an emulator room- MAME, etc.

We already have one person bringing a Crazy Climber cocktail arcade game, John Litva. And, another vendor has promised to bring several arcade games as well. Please email us if you wish to bring an arcade game to the show.

We have a food service this year! The wife of one of our organizers, will be providing food, soda, and such!

Attention Atari ST/Falcon/TT users!!!
If you want anything from 1632 Systems, please contact:

Nick Harlow
http://www.1632systems.co.uk/
http://catalog.zen.co.uk/actinic/1632Systems/

Also, we have been told that a CCAG 2001 specific Atari 2600 game will be available for limited release!

See ya at the CCAG!

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Whew. Just a few more days to go, then I get to treat myself to a week-long vacation.

Vacations are wonderful things. I know, you don't need to be told that. But I need to say it. I'm not one of those people who get several months worth of vacation a year. Like you, I bust my bottom all year long for this chance to basically do nothing for a week straight.

Of course, I've got projects lined up... I've got a lot of work to do on polishing the mirror I'm grinding and polishing for a telescope. And I've been meaning to rework my prairie dog web page. Of course, there's also the AtariNews.Org website that needs my attention. I really do try to keep it current, but it's been a losing battle for the past month or so. I'm sure that there are also a hundred different things that are going to pop up no matter how well I plan my week.

Unfortunately my wife wasn't able to get the same week off of work, so

I'll be waving to her as she turns out the driveway to go to work each day...

LIFE IS GOOD. <evil grin>

Wednesday is also the Forth of July. It's the day that we yanks celebrate our independence. It's something well worth celebrating, but please, please, please do it responsibly. Remember don't drink and drive! The life you save may be MINE!

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info available every week.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
==========

'Elliot' asks about N AES:

"I have bought a machine and it came with N AES, however it is a German version - were can I find the relevant English files for it?"

Martin Byttebier tells Elliot:

"Which version?
For version 1.1.0 and 1.2 you can find English rsc on the Belgian ftp-server:

ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be//mint/gem/aes/n_aes/

The latest N_AES is delivered with German/English rsc."

Elliot comes back and tells Martin:

"OK, it is version 2 which means it should have the English RSC files no? I have found some English files but they are for earlier versions.

The set-up program does has a little menu to change the language but none of the others work, any ideas?

Also the real problem I think is Thing, is there an English version of that too?"

Martin replies to Elliot:

"You should have in n_aes/rsc/ a file called RS0. That's the English rsc.
Load n_aes.cnf into an editor and change the line 'language = 1' into language = 0

>
>Also the real problem I think is Thing, is there an English version of that
>too?

Yes, on the Belgian ftp-server:

ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/utilities/desktops/

utilities/desktops:

```
total 6080
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp       176 May  5  1999 900icons.upl
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp    400010 May  5  1999 900icons.zip
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp    159512 Sep 19  1999 gemdesk.zip
-rw-r--r--    1 ftp   1291452 Nov 15  2000 jdemo25d.zip
-rw-r--r--    1 ftp   1292717 Nov 15  2000 jdemo25e.zip
-rw-r--r--    1 ftp   1290221 Nov 15  2000 jdemo25f.zip
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp    549369 May  5  1999 thin127d.lzh
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp       106 Sep  2  1999 thin127n.upl
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp     48500 Sep  2  1999 thin127n.zip
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp    475641 May  5  1999 thng109e.zip #-->English 1.09
-rw-rw-r--    1 ftp    558123 May  5  1999 thng127e.lzh #-->English
1.27 "
```

Jo Even Skarstein adds:

But it isn't documented anywhere (at least not in English!) that you have to set "language=1" in n_aes.cnf to switch to English ;-) And this only applies to the AES, there's no English RSC for N.Thing. You'll need to switch to Thing (and register) for that."

Joseph Place asks about speeding up our favorite browser:

"I a using CAB 1.5 on a 4 MB 520STE. The web pages download quickly, but some take a very long time to display. It will say Formatting <table> for a very long time. Can anyone help? Is this normal, or are there some settings I can change? I am using it text only."

Martin Tarenskeen asks Joseph:

"CAB is not fast. Everyone who uses it knows this, but it is still the most stable Atari browser. Text only mode helps, but makes some webpages completely useless.

Have you tried the 2.8 demo version, or thought of buying the commercial version? Even the demo version is much better than 1.5. 1.5 does not support frames. In the demo version the hotlist is disabled, use 1.5 to manage your hotlist, use STinG/STiK and Dan Ackerman's OVL and you can use the 2.8 demo perfectly!

Version 2.8 is a little bit faster, but still very slow."

Ken Kosut adds:

"I Use FlashII (text only), and as mentioned, some sites are totally useless.
I would like to try CAB 2.x demo
But when I go to the following site,
my system says: 14meg read out of 16meg. (Something like that)

I freeze up at this site, and cursor will not move around to highlight links. What's wrong?

The site is:
user/tninet.se/~gcc561r/english/

Very interesting site, by the way."

Martin Takenskeen replies:

"The CAB demo can be found on ASH's own website:
http://www.application-systems.de/atari/produktefuratari.html

don't be afraid of a little German. There are english RSC files available."

Edward Baiz adds:

"I used to have the same setup (CAB 1.5) with my 1040STe. Cab 1.5 is slow, but works fine. I would highlight the option to operate Cab without graphics. This will speeds things up a little. I would also get Cab 2.8 with is a lot better than 1.5. 2.8 also is has cookies which is needed for most websites. Still, you should be able to get on most sites with 1.5. It will just take a little more time."

Matthias Jaap adds his own thoughts on the subject:

"There's nothing wrong with CAB. The STE is just a very slow computer to browse the web. Pages containing tables may also take longer to display because the browser has to "calculate" the complete page before displaying it.

Later versions of CAB are a bit more quickly but don't expect wonders - you are browsing the net with a computer that is basically 16 years old."

Joseph Place replies to all:

"Thanks! I wasn't sure really what to expect, since I am new to this. I wasn't aware of the demo version, and would be glad to buy the commercial version if it works well. I'll check it out."

Keven Fedirko asks about using a television with his ST:

"I just booted up my old 1040 STE system after about six years of storage, and it still seems to work. I only have a mono monitor left that works, as my color bit the dust in 1995. I tried to get the composite feed out to a monitor, but I didn't get a signal. Tried w and w/o the mono monitor hooked up. Is this supposed to work, or do I need a color monitor patched in to get a signal out to a regular TV . . . or is my port fried or what?

Is it possible to get/make a cord to use a current mac/pc multi-sync monitor on an ST? That would make me pretty happy..."

Janez Valant tells Keven:

"You need to wire pins 1 and 2 (sound and composite) and pin 13 (gnd) to TV via SCART or to RGB monitor. Without mono monitor connected. As I know all STE's have composite signal except French ones.

No, it's not possible to use a Mac/PC monitor. New Multisync doesn't support horizontal frequencies bellow 30khz and for RGB mode (Atari, Amiga, 8 bit machines) you need 15.7khz.. U can get older Nec (Nec3D) and you then can have all resolutions on it."

Keven tells Janez:

"Thanks for the amazingly quick reply, but I'm still confused. What is "SCART", and are you trying to explain how to take/make the multi-pin

monitor port signals to a TV or passing this signal from an RGB monitor to a regular composite TV...

Are there spec’s online somewhere that already explain all of this stuff in a FAQ...?"

Our old friend Bob Retelle tells Keven:

""SCART" is a EUROPEAN video cable standard. Only useful if you’re in the region where TV sets have the SCART connector on them.

The pins mentioned need to be connected to the composite video input on a TV. Ground goes to the ground on the TV input, the others have to be combined for the video in signal. Usually there are some resistors involved, although I have no idea what the values may be. Hopefully someone else has more detailed info available.

Another thought- check on eBay under their "Vintage Computers" category. You’ll find lots of people selling Atari hardware, including monitors, usually very cheaply."

Alexander Chaney tells us that he’s a...

"Newbie TT030 owner looking to find one of the mysterious video cards or ethernet networking cards.

I do understand that these are extremely rare, but I cannot find the site where I read that someone was creating new video and network cards.

If anyone can point me to a current FAQ, I could spare everyone a bunch of old questions.

Also, are their any users or user groups in the northeast part of the US particularly NJ, PA, or NY.

Lastly, are there any magazines online or otherwise or active websites that will help me better understand a few topics including, mint, Linux on Atari, Networking, and video?"

Rob Mahlert jumps in and tells Alexander:

"You might want to check out Mario’s new Galaxy Card.. Graphics AND Ethernet card in one for the TT and Mega STE. the url is http://gem.win.co.nz/mb/ click on the Atari hardware link for the Galaxy.
The US dealer is SystemforTomorrow (.com)

News site..
www.Atari-Users.Net (my site)
www.AtariNews.Org A-ONE Magazine
www.Atari.org ISP problems - but will be back up
www.myatari.net online magazine
and more.. check out the links on my site and on Atari.org

User groups.. don’t know of any active groups in the Northeast. (I’m in Massachusetts).

If you are free on Tuesday nights at 9pm (-5 GMT).. join us on our Atari chat on Atarinews.org:
telnet://www.atarinews.org

Login and password are "bbs", then create a new account.

To get to the chat room.. from the main menu.. "T" alk (return) "C" hat (return) then hit enter for the chat id.

It’s open to EVERYONE.. so stop by! We chat every Tuesday rain or shine!"

Edward Baiz asks about using Kobold:

"I bought a used 3 gig Seagate external SCSI drive for only $30. It works fine with my Hades system. The only thing is that I have to turn off Kobold if I want to use it. I cannot copy anything to it when Kobold is activated. It is the same situation when I try to copy from certain CD Rom discs. I guess it really does not matter since I am planning on using the drive for Linux, but I was wondering if anyone has any ideas. I partitioned the drive into one big 3 gig partition. Could that be the problem?"

Mike Bedford tells Edward:

"If you’re not using Kobold 3.5 and have set the drive to use long file names this might be the problem. I use Kobold but the earlier version could not read partitions (10 x 2G) that were set for long file names."

Hallvard Tangeraas asks about installing AHDI:

"I know, I know..... why use AHDI when there are so many better alternatives around?

Well, I actually use HDdriver, but this is for a machine I’m selling, so that’s out of the question.
I’ve installed CBHD on this Mega ST machine (put an IDE harddisk *inside* the machine as well!), but although it works fine, I have problems with some software. Let me explain.....

I’m trying out "SoftLink" (a basic multi-tasking sort of program: a "program switcher" if you may) from C-Lab (Emagic) which allows you to switch between several MIDI programs (other programs work as well) without existing one for the other.

Anyway, I have this strange problem where, when I use the "LINKEDIT.PRG" configuration program (to assign how many memory partitions to use and how much memory they should have each) I almost always get a "Not enough memory" message, even though I’m within the memory limit of what this configuration program tells me is available! Very strange.

So I tried it without booting my harddisk, running "LINKEDIT.PRG" and the SoftLink itself afterwards, and it worked fine!
And since I’v had no ACCessories or AUTO programs installed I suspect the harddisk driver to be eating all this memory (though still not accounting for it as LinkEdit.prg tells me that I have more memory available than I seemingly really have.

So.... (a deep breath!!), I was wondering if I should give AHDI a go. I found the following from one of the FTP sites: AHDI 6.061 (only contained "AHDI.PRG" but no docs), AHDICONF (which contained a readme file in addition to the configuration program, but in German), and finally HD_PATCH which I understand should make AHDI configurable or

something.

I know that a "SHDRIVER.SYS" file should reside in the root directory of the boot drive, but I guess this involves more than just copying "AHDI.PRG" and renaming it to "SHDRIVER.SYS"? How do I actually install it?

I'm using a 4 Mb Mega ST with TOS 2.06 and an IDE interface with an IDE drive connected to it."

Guido Lehwalder tells Hallvard:

"you should look for the HDX-Package... in this AHDI should ne included and the Installer for the .SYS"

Lyndon Amsdon adds:

"... there should be an option to install AHDI in one of those programs. If not then you'll have to download it from somewhere else that does have this program in its archive."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - 'Bloody Roar 3'! AVC/JCU News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""" JagFest News! 'Alone in the Dark'!
  NASCAR Heat 2002! CG Expo News!
  And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Designed By NASCAR Drivers and Raced By Their
Fans, Infogrames' NASCAR Heat 2002 Burns Up
the Track on Your PlayStation 2

One of the hottest racing experiences of the year comes to the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system with the release of Infogrames' NASCAR Heat 2002. Challenge top NASCAR drivers like Dale Earnhardt Jr., Jeff Gordon, Rusty Wallace, Matt Kenseth and more, head-to-head in the ultimate test of racing skill on actual NASCAR tracks of the 2001 Winston Cup season.

Selectable racing modes capture all the thrills, drama, and split-second decisions of the on-the-edge world of the NASCAR driver.

In NASCAR Heat 2002 players choose between Beat the Heat, Race the Pro, Head-to-Head, Championship and Single Race modes in one of the most intense racing games that has ever been brought to a gaming console. Single Race and Championship modes put gamers in the seat of powerful stock cars as they try to best the stars of NASCAR on just one track or the tracks of the entire 2001 NASCAR Winston Cup Season. More than 36 all-new Beat the Heat racing scenarios, introduced by drivers like Jeff Gordon, give players the feeling of a one-on-one experience with the heroes of NASCAR as they are dropped into the most intense moments in NASCAR competition; asking them to make split-second decisions and develop the same skills required by real NASCAR drivers. In Race the Pro players try to out-run top drivers in the sport by racing against ‘‘phantom" cars driven by real NASCAR Winston Cup drivers. Head-to-Head mode allows two fans to race against each other to see who the best driver really is.

Normal and Expert difficulty levels ensure both beginners and pros alike can enjoy the thrill of NASCAR racing, while state-of-the-art car modeling adds to NASCAR Heat 2002’s immersive feel with a sense of speed, realistic car damage, dents, scratches, sparks and collisions that put players in the driver’s seat for the Winston Cup championship.

NASCAR Heat 2002 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system unique features include 2001 season car art, drivers and tracks; 36 Beat the Heat challenges designed and introduced by top NASCAR drivers; 19 real-world NASCAR tracks; 25 Winston Cup drivers and 23-car racing packs in single-player modes.

Developed by Monster Games, Inc., NASCAR Heat 2002 for the PlayStation 2 is available at most major retail outlets for an estimated retail price of $49.99.

3DO Ships World Destruction League: WarJetz for the PlayStation 2

The 3DO Company announced that the World Destruction League: WarJetz game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system shipped on schedule to retailers across the country. The World Destruction League: WarJetz game is the ultimate in spectacle entertainment and gladiatorial competition, broadcast on post-apocalyptic television. The WarJetz game is combat mayhem taken to the air.

The World Destruction League: WarJetz game is action packed, using raw, over-the-top attitude to annihilate the enemy. The WDL has set up a battle-tournament, where twisted contestants engage in head-to-head combat adding excitement and chaos to game play. The game offers a unique fantasy world in which to experience air combat competition. Engage in aerial competition, and duke it out against both ground and air targets, each with their own special aircraft and weapons.

The WarJetz game offers air-to-air battle and ground target bombing in 8 real world environments with recognizable landmarks. Gamers won’t grow tired with 24 game battle arenas and 8 action-packed styles of tournament play. Frenetic two-player action makes for multiplayer mayhem. The game utilizes anti-aliasing, extensive light sourcing and dynamic lighting, and

pushes the limits of amazing special effects with a spectacular nuclear blast effect that will blow entire cityscapes into debris. The game also features vapor trails, extreme weather, realistic explosions and debris clouds from collapsing buildings.

‘‘The World Destruction League: WarJetz game is also available on the PlayStation Game Console."

THQ Ships ‘MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael’ for PlayStation2

THQ Inc. announced the release of ‘‘MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael" for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system.

Developed by THQ subsidiary Pacific Coast Power & Light, the adrenaline-pumping title features the sport’s number one rider, Ricky Carmichael, a highly detailed freestyle mode for tricks and exploration, and an ultra-realistic racing mode. ‘‘MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael" is scheduled to be on store shelves nationwide in time for the July 4th holiday.

‘‘Ricky Carmichael is the premier rider in a sport that has really taken off," stated Alison Locke, executive vice president of North American publishing, THQ. ‘‘In addition to national race coverage regularly airing on major networks, the popularity of motocross is due, in no small part, to the emergence of freestyle as a spectacular visual event. This is exactly what we have captured with ’MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael."’

‘‘It’s awesome, totally fun and innovative. This is by far the most advanced motocross video game, with realistic graphics and bike control. I’m proud to be involved with it," said five-time national champion, Ricky Carmichael. ‘‘THQ has really captured the essence of motocross."

‘‘We are very excited about the new physics engine we created for ’MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael,"’ said Don Traeger, president, Pacific Coast Power & Light. ‘‘Not only does this game have an extensive racing mode, but it has every wicked trick in the sport. Players will feel every bump on the track, while controlling the clutch and bike speed to pull off real tricks including stoppies, wheelies, back-flips, 360s and many more."

‘‘MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael," the latest installment in THQ’s motocross series, is being backed by a multi-million dollar marketing campaign and has already been receiving high praise from the video game press, including:

* ‘‘... the best moto-cross game a Sony system has seen." -- Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
* ‘‘... competitors will have their hands full trying to keep up. Chalk this one up on the must-have list." -- PS2.IGN.com

The robust freestyle mode is one of the main aspects that separates ‘‘MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael" from every other racing title. Players are able to explore the open terrain without limits or restrictions. Secret areas and death-defying tricks play a large role here. Gamers will also appreciate highly detailed graphics, which include long, detailed sightlines completely void of pop-up or fogging. ‘‘MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael" was developed using RenderWare Graphics, the middleware solution from Criterion Software.

Included in the game’s 30-rider roster are some of the flashiest freestyle professionals. Gamers can perform tricks and combos with freestylers like Carey Hart, Trevor Vines and Mike Jones. The top names in racing are also well represented, with riders like Ricky Carmichael, Mike LaRocco and Kevin Windham. All of this is showcased on officially licensed events and tracks, constructed from actual satellite data for an unprecedented level of realism.

Infogrames, Inc. Dominates Store Shelves This Week With Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare

The Survival Horror Franchise That Started It All Is Back to Terrorize You Once Again ...

It’s what you fear ... Infogrames, Inc. announced that Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare began shipping to stores this week for PlayStation, Personal Computer and Game Boy Color. Edward Carnby, the famed supernatural detective, is back in his fourth installment of the franchise, and this time it will take more than his trusty pistol to keep him alive!

‘‘Alone in the Dark (AITD) is the ultimate survival-horror game that for years the industry has tried to mimic," said Tom Richardson, director of marketing for Infogrames, Inc.’s Los Angeles label. ‘‘With the newest incarnation of the series already reaching the #1 spot in Europe and the tremendous sell-in we’ve had in the US, it proves that Alone in the Dark still has the formula necessary to entice the fans. Consumers have been clambering to get their hands on Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare ever since the title was announced."

In AITD: The New Nightmare, two diverse adventures await players as they assume the role of either Edward Carnby or Aline Cedrac, a determined young archaeologist, and its up to them to reclaim three ancient tablets before the ultimate evil is unleashed on Shadow Island. Throughout the game, Carnby and Aline are faced with mysterious puzzles, demonic monsters, and disturbing events taking place. To provide clues for difficult situations, or comic relief to break the suspense, players can summon the other character via walkie-talkie any time throughout the game.

As in the first three Alone in the Dark titles, AITD: The New Nightmare stays true to its successful formula of innovative camera angles, suspenseful in-depth storylines inspired by the works of H.P. Lovecraft, and 3D characters set in graphically amazing backgrounds. AITD: The New Nightmare features over 1200 pre-rendered backgrounds, each recreated with varying levels of light, and utilizes sophisticated lighting technology, with the flashlight being the most prominent example. The flashlight serves as a key gameplay element which players can use as a weapon to deter light-sensitive foes, to illuminate rooms void of light switches, or to shine into corners that often hide secret items in their shadows.

Insiduous creatures inhabit the island, lurking in dark corners, drop from the ceiling, or wait in the open anxiously anticipating your next move. To combat them, Carnby and Aline gain access to highly innovative light-based weapons, including Carnby’s Photopulsar, emitting a blast rendering everything in its path dead and the user temporarily blinded, and Aline’s Disc-Launcher, a rapid fire gun emitting magnesium-coated discs great for damaging enemies at close or long range.

Making the game even more immersive for players, AITD: The New Nightmare uses an extensive music score, including the original theme song of the game composed by Stewart Copeland, appropriately titled, ‘‘Alone in the Dark." A five-time Grammy Award winner for his work with the renowned rock band The Police, Stewart Copeland has brought his distinctive sound to the movies in a series of inventive film scores and now offers his talents to the interactive entertainment industry. Mr. Copeland combined hard-edged rhythmic riffs from electric guitar and acoustic bass with rich sultry effects from electronics along with lyrics that captured the essence of the game’s spine-tingling plot.

Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare for PlayStation and PC were developed by DarkWorks and by Pocket Studios for Game Boy Color. The game began shipping to most major retail stores this week with an estimated retail price of $39.95 for PlayStation and PC, and $29.95 for Game Boy Color.

Activision Ships Highly Anticipated Titles Bloody Roar 3 and Bomberman Tournament

Pulse-pounding arena fighting action and explosive blast-a-thons will ambush North American retail shelves this week with the release of Activision, Inc.’s Bloody Roar 3 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system and Bomberman Tournament for the Game Boy Advance handheld video game system. The latest versions of these critically acclaimed franchises will deliver non-stop action experiences that will appeal to fans of these popular brands and newcomers alike.

‘‘Next generation technology is enabling us to take Bloody Roar and Bomberman to all-new levels," states Larry Goldberg, executive vice president, Activision Worldwide Studios. ‘‘Bloody Roar 3’s incredible 3D graphics and stunning special effects deliver a new twist to the popular fighting tradition that the series is known for. While Bomberman Tournament’s highly charged four-player option offers a fast and furious gaming adventure."

As the newest installment in the Bloody Roar series, Bloody Roar 3 immerses players in a 3D, adrenaline pumping gameplay experience with 14 playable characters. Each character has the ability to transform from human to an alternate beast life form with special attack beast moves. Featuring fast and fluid fighting action and single and two player head-to-head action, players must use their unique fighting skills to battle their way through nine different immersive environments that feature destructible walls and floors. Bloody Roar 3 was developed by Hudson Soft Co., Ltd. and Eighting Co., Ltd. and is rated ‘‘T" (Teen -- Blood, Suggestive Themes and Violence -- content suitable for persons ages 13) by the ESRB. The game carries a suggested retail price of $49.99.

Featuring fast and furious gameplay, Bomberman Tournament delivers its signature brand of non-stop blasting action to fans of the best-selling franchise. In the game, players must tactically navigate through eight different battlefield mazes while hunting down opponents and avoiding bombs. The game is one of the first Game Boy Advance titles that allows up to four players to battle it out from one Game Pak using the Game Boy Advance Game Linkfi Cable. The game also features an in-depth adventure mode that lets players travel on a single player quest through five expansive lands, interact with characters, solve brain teasing puzzles and battle

mega-bosses. Bomberman Tournament was developed by Hudson Soft Co., Ltd. and is rated ‘‘E" (Everyone -- Mild Violence -- content suitable for persons ages six and older) by the ESRB. The game carries a suggested retail price of $39.99.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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JagFest 2001 News!

Make plans to attend JagFest 2001 on June 30th in Milwaukee, WI, today! Songbird is going to bring a TON of new/rare games for sale as well as quite a few reasonably-priced used games. Plus, the protos that will at this show will be AMAZING to say the least. Thea Realm Fighters, Brett Hull Hockey, Arena Football, and many rare/unreleased games for other systems like the NES, Lynx, and so on.

Are you ready for the BattleSphere network?

Are you ready for the mutant horde that is Protector SE?

Can you take on three of your buddies and emerge victorious in Lynx Championship Rally?

What special, unannounced surprise(s) will be at the Songbird table this weekend?

Attend JagFest 2001, and find out!

Carl Forhan
Songbird Productions
http://songbird.atari.net

Classic Gaming Expo NEWS!

For Immediate Release

Contact John Hardie, Sean Kelly, and Joe Santulli
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DRAGON’S LAIR 3-D TO DEBUT EXCLUSIVELY AT CLASSIC GAMING EXPO

VALLEY STREAM, NY (June 25, 2001) -- CGE Services Corp. in

cooperation with Dragonstone Software has announced that Dragon's Lair 3-D, one of the industry's most eagerly anticipated software titles, is set to debut at Classic Gaming Expo 2001.

Based on the record-shattering Dragon's Lair arcade game which was released in 1983, Dragon's Lair 3-D is poised to take the videogame industry by storm just as its' predecessor did. The original game, created by Don Bluth, Rick Dyer, Gary Goldman, and John Pomeroy, has endured for 18 years as one of the most recognizable arcade games ever. In addition to holding the honor of being the world's first commercially successful laser-disc arcade machine, Dragon's Lair is one of three games on display in the Smithsonian Institute, the other two being Pong and Pac-Man.

The games' creators have formed Dragon's Lair LLC. as well as Dragonstone Software, a development house ready to bring out top quality software titles for the PC, Mac, PS2, and X-Box platforms. Dragon's Lair 3-D will be the first release and players will again assume the role of the brave knight, Dirk the Daring, as he fights to save princess Daphne. "With our current 3-D technology, we can give the player complete control over Dirk, with the ability to fully explore the castle in his quest to rescue the princess," states Rick Dyer, one of the creators of the original Dragon's Lair game. "In Dragon's Lair 3-D we take the player on an adventurous trek via a technically innovative 3-D game that will impress both the reminiscing and modern hard core gamer."

Dyer, and fellow Dragon's Lair creator, John Pomeroy, plan to be on hand to demonstrate the game at Classic Gaming Expo. Although shown in the very early stages of development at the 2000 E-3 show, the game was noticeably absent from this year's line-up. Notes Dyer, "By debuting our product exclusively at Classic Gaming Expo, we have the best of both worlds. In addition to previewing the game to the media, we can also present it to our potential customers."

Aside from the preview of Dragon's Lair 3-D, Dyer and Pomeroy have created a video presentation that will involve tons of footage from their archives. Several of the video highlights include: Cutting-room floor scenes from the original Dragon's Lair game, behind-the-scenes footage of the making of Dragon's Lair 3-D, early coverage of the original game, and possibly some scenes from the upcoming Dragon's Lair movie.

Pomeroy, a veteran animator at Disney, also plans to show some of his latest accomplishments including his work from the hit movie Atlantis, as well as the upcoming film, Treasure Planet. Additionally, Pomeroy and Dyer have donated two autographed animation cells, one from Atlantis and one from the original Dragon's Lair, as prizes for Classic Gaming Expo. The cells, which are valued at over one thousand dollars each, will be given away during the show. The Dragon's Lair 3-D preview and video presentations are scheduled to take place at 1pm. on Saturday, August 11th in the Classic Gaming Expo Keynote Room. For more information visit: http://www.cgexpo.com or send email to: info@cgexpo.com

Now in its fourth year, Classic Gaming Expo remains the industry's only annual event that is dedicated to celebrating the roots of electronic entertainment; bringing together industry pioneers, gaming enthusiasts, and the media for the ultimate experience in learning, game-playing and networking. Classic Gaming Expo is a production of CGE Services, Corp. (www.cgexpo.com)

AVC/JCU News Update!

On June 29th, 2k1 Atari Video Club/Jaguar Community United (AVC/JCU) has announced starting with Vol. 12 #1 (which will be in June 2002) of The Atari Zone Fanzine that the fanzines will be available in PDF format and it will also be available on-line at the club's website.

Also this will also end the E-zine since the fanzine will be taking its place. (Vol.4 n.6 will be the final e-zine) For those who still want the regular print version don't worry, Daniel Iacovelli, AVC/JCU chairperson & Editor of The Atari Zone Fanzine, has mentioned that he will still continue the normal subscription basis for those who want the Print version sent to their home. He also mentioned that PDF version would be available on-line bi-monthly just like it's print version. Also he did mention that the fest issue will only be available by request and will be in black in white (this might change though).

Daniel M. Iacovelli
AVC/JCU chairperson
editor of the Atari Zone fanzine
AVC Online: http://avconline.atari.org

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Appeals Court Overturns Order to Split Microsoft

A U.S. appeals court on Thursday unanimously overturned an order to split Microsoft Corp. in two, but left intact a finding that the software giant illegally used its monopoly in the Windows operating system.

The seven-judge appeals panel agreed that Microsoft holds a monopoly in personal computer operating systems and some of its competitive practices amounted to illegal use of that monopoly.

While both sides claimed this decision marked a victory, Microsoft's shares ended Thursday trading higher. After being halted most of the day, Microsoft shares ended up $1.60, or 2.3 percent, at $72.74 after the halt was lifted at about 2:45 p.m. EDT.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia also ordered that a new lower court judge look at whether Microsoft illegally tied its Internet browser to the Windows operating system to maintain that monopoly, a question that could have implications for Microsoft’s soon-to-be-released Windows XP operating system.

The court overturned a ruling by the lower court judge, Thomas Penfield Jackson, that Microsoft had tried to monopolize the market for Internet browsers. The appeals panel also rebuked Jackson for giving the ‘‘appearance of partiality" through his media interviews during the trial.

‘‘Although we find no evidence of actual bias, we hold that the actions of the trial judge seriously tainted the proceedings before the District Court and called into question the integrity of the judicial process," the court said in its ruling.

‘‘We are therefore constrained to vacate the (breakup order) on remedies, remand the case for reconsideration of the remedial order, and require that the case be assigned to a different trial judge on remand."

Microsoft said it was pleased by the ruling and suggested it would be willing to head to the bargaining table.

‘‘Today’s ruling drastically narrows the case and removes the breakup cloud from the company," Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan said. ‘‘We will continue to work to resolve the remaining issues without the need for continued litigation, which benefits no one."

The U.S. Justice Department also welcomed the appeals court finding that Microsoft engaged in illegal conduct to maintain its monopoly over personal computer operating systems. ‘‘This is a significant victory," Attorney General John Ashcroft told reporters at a news conference.

Charles James, the department’s top antitrust enforcer, said the decision vindicated the department on its core claim that Microsoft engaged in anticompetitive conduct to preserve its monopoly position in computer operating systems.

The White House said it was too early to conclude that the Justice Department would pursue the case less vigorously during President Bush’s administration than it had under former President Bill Clinton. ‘‘I think it’s too soon to make any conclusions," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

Some antitrust experts said even though the appeals court threw out the government’s breakup plan, it was not a clear victory for Microsoft.

‘‘The main features that we see are an affirmation on the monopolization, so it’s going to become very difficult for Microsoft to continue ... in its central position that it is not a monopolist and that it did not abuse its monopoly power," Andy Gavil, professor of law at Howard University in Washington D.C. ‘‘That much the court of appeals has agreed with."

But shares of Microsoft rivals such as Internet and media giant AOL Time Warner Inc.; Red Hat Inc., which makes an alternative operating system to Windows; and Internet audio and video software maker RealNetworks Inc., all fell after the news.

The appeals court agreed with Jackson that Microsoft had used its monopoly

power to maintain its marketing dominance. Specifically, the judges cited the company for co-mingling the computer code of Internet Explorer with Windows code and excluding Internet Explorer from the Windows add/remove program.

The court also affirmed Jackson’s contention that the company abused its power by making exclusive deals with software developers, Internet access providers, and other companies in the industry.

The court also found that Microsoft broke the law by using its monopoly power to threaten Intel Corp.

Jackson had proposed splitting Microsoft into one company producing operating systems and another selling software applications like word processors and spreadsheet programs to increase competition.

But the appeals court said it was difficult to devise acceptable antitrust remedies for high-tech industries.

‘‘By the time a court can assess liability, firms, products, and the marketplace are likely to have changed dramatically," the court said, echoing arguments Microsoft itself has made.

The landmark antitrust case, filed in May 1998 under the Clinton administration, is the biggest since the government took AT&T Corp. to court, resulting in the 1984 breakup of that company into regional telephone companies.

Much of the case revolved around Microsoft’s motives and tactics in competing with Netscape Communications Corp., a once dominant Web browser maker now owned by AOL Time Warner.

After 78 days of trial, Jackson found Microsoft holds monopoly power in the market for personal computer operating systems and illegally used that power, including integrating its Web browser into Windows and refusing to offer it separately.

On June 7 last year, Jackson ordered that the company be broken up to prevent future antitrust violations, and set various changes in the companies business practices, all of which he suspended pending appeal.

The appeals court ruling parallels some misgivings about the government’s case and Jackson’s decision that the judges expressed during oral arguments heard in February.

In the two days of hearings, the appeals judges questioned whether the violations warranted breakup and why there was not a full hearing on the breakup remedy.

For Microsoft, the ruling could complicate the roll-out of its latest version of the operating system -- Windows XP.

Microsoft plans to add software features to its new Windows XP as part of its .NET strategy that promotes Internet subscription services but that could involve anew the tying issues that the appeals court wants the lower court to revisit.

Napster Request for Rehearing Denied

A federal appeals court on Monday handed Napster yet another legal defeat by rejecting its request for a chance to challenge the crippling injunction won by the music industry against its song-swapping service.

Barring an appeal to the Supreme Court, Napster now faces a full trial in the record industry's copyright infringement suit against it, which legal experts say could result in damages large enough to put it out business as an independent entity.

''This decision puts to rest any questions that Napster has raised regarding the earlier decision and affirms the rights of copyrighted holders on the Internet," said Cary Sherman, senior vice president and general counsel for the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

Napster said it was disappointed with the ruling and was reviewing its legal options as the case moves to a full trial.

Napster first requested the rehearing after a three-judge panel for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that it was infringing on copyrights and that an injunction, ordered earlier by U.S. District Court Judge Marilyn Hall Patel, was not only warranted but required.

Napster's response was to request a hearing before the entire appeals court, saying that the injunction against the company was too broad and violated its rights to free speech.

The recording industry had sought the injunction to bar Napster from offering its songs on the service while a full copyright infringement case proceeded in court.

A date for that trial has not been set, although the injunction, which has been in force since March, has already succeeded in curtailing activity on Napster.

''We recognized going in that rehearing petitions are infrequently granted. That is especially so at this stage of the case, where no trial has yet been held in the underlying case," said Jonathan Schwartz, general counsel for Napster.

''We will now review our legal options going forward," he said, adding the company will continue to comply with the injunction.

Schwartz said Napster also believes the launch of a new secure membership service later this summer will put to rest many of the record industry's outstanding legal issues.

Analysts said Napster could face millions, or even billions, of dollars in damages if the record labels win the case at trial.

''Napster's next option is to just let it go to a full trial and take its chances there or to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court on the injunction," said Ric Dube, an analyst with WebNoize

The world's biggest record labels -- including Vivendi Universal's Universal Music, Sony Music, AOL Time Warner's Warner Music, EMI Group Plc, and Bertelsmann AG's BMG -- first sued Napster in December 1999, claiming it was a haven for copyright piracy that would cost them billions of dollars in lost music sales.

According to research firm WebNoize, the average number of files shared by a user on Napster fell from 220 in February to just 21 by the end of May. WebNoize also estimated that just 360 million files were traded through the service in May, versus 2.79 billion in February.

Meanwhile, Napster on Friday released a new version of its software that allows users to find many songs that were inadvertently being blocked as a result of the injunction.

A spokesman said the latest version should enable people to trade songs by independent or other artists that are not required to be blocked under the terms of the injunction.

Napster also got a shot in the arm earlier this month when it clinched a licensing deal with MusicNet -- a joint music subscription service between RealNetworks Inc. and three big labels -- BMG, EMI, and AOL Time Warner. Under that deal, Napster will be able to carry these labels' music once it launches a new version that pays royalties.

But Dube said if the recording labels win the case at trial, they can hold Napster for significant damages, which are likely to exceed the value of the company.

''The major companies can come out of this owning Napster," he said.

Bad News Keeps on Coming for Napster Users

It appears that for Napster, at least, bad news does indeed come in threes. Not only is the once wildly popular music site losing users in droves, but those who are still loyal face two new potential obstacles.

An AT&T computer scientist says peer-to-peer tools leave users open to attack, more so than other technologies. In addition, a hoax circulated on the Internet this week warned Napster users of a new, hybrid computer code, a "ticking time bomb," that is undetectable by virus software.

The hoax, in the guise of a press release, warned Napster users that if they download copyrighted songs on July 4th, they "will find their illicit music unusable and their computers frozen due to the timed release of this bomb."

The hoax warning, from a group called MusicPanel, was posted in three Usenet discussion groups. It said that those who downloaded the top 500 songs on the Internet on Independence Day would be affected by a hybrid computer code hidden by embedded bits of information.

The code,according to the statement, was only loaded into copyrighted material.

"It's the answer to the 'sonic stealing' of legitimate music without payment to the creators, and was developed by a group of musician-programmers to redress the grievances of recorded artists who find their music being swapped and lifted from the Internet," the release said.

Also this week, AT&T computer scientist Steven Bellovin said file-sharing

tools like those used by Napster, Gnutella and similar sites contain a number of flaws and vulnerabilities.

File-sharing sites allow users to search and download MP3 files from each other’s computers. Bellovin said Napster’s and Gnutella’s applications may have bugs that could be used to take over another’s computer.

He added that malicious users could exploit Gnutella’s protocol to track a user’s Web-surfing habits through a piece of code that identifies the user each time he or she makes a transaction.

He also said that if someone wanted to crash another user’s computer system by overloading it with data, Gnutella would be powerless to prevent it.

Bugs in software are common and most can be fixed with patches, but peer-to-peer technology can be riskier.

Not only are users encouraged to share information with any number of other unknown users, they often share important information about their computers -- information that could be used against them.

Some peer-to-peer sites recognize the potential dangers and have tools available to prevent them. BearShare, for example, has defenses against Trojan horse viruses -- malicious code hidden in seemingly normal files.

Earlier this week, WebNoize said that Napster’s new software, intended to track the trading of songs, was turning users away. Napster users are now sharing an average of 1.5 songs a month, according to the report, compared to 220 songs during the month of February.

The new software uses digital "fingerprint" technology, which compares the digital structure of the music to a database of music that the recording industry claims is copyrighted.

Napster has promised record companies that it will turn its service into a legitimate subscriber-based system by September.

Judge Denies Music Industry Motion Vs Aimster

A federal judge has denied a motion by the Recording Industry Association of America and 17 companies to dismiss a lawsuit filed against them in an upstate New York court by file-sharing company Aimster, a recording industry lawyer said on Monday.

U.S. District Judge Lawrence Kahn on Friday refused to throw out a suit by Aimster against the major record companies. He also refused to transfer it to Manhattan, where 36 companies filed two subsequent copyright-infringement suits against Aimster.

In the lawsuit filed in U.S. Northern District Court in Albany, New York, Aimster is seeking a declaratory judgement that it does not violate recording copyrights by allowing music files to be shared over the Internet.

‘‘We see this as a very important victory that allows us to continue this fight in a fair forum without being disadvantaged by the unlimited resources of very large companies," said Aimster Chief Executive Johnny

Deep.

Aimster has hired David Boies, the top gun lawyer who has been representing leading music-swap service Napster in its landmark copyright suit, and is seeking to have all the cases consolidated in Albany.

‘‘It is our view that copyright holders should be permitted to determine where the case should proceed," said Matt Oppenheim, senior vice president of business, legal affairs for the RIAA. "Regardless wherever this is litigated, we’re confident these holders’ rights will be affirmed," he said.

Aimster has contended any attempt to monitor its members would itself be a violation of federal copyright law and users’ privacy since it has encrypted transmissions on its network.

He has said Aimster, a Napster-like program, is better insulated from lawsuits than a fully open file-swapping services like Napster because users have more control over files as they share only with people designated on instant messaging ‘‘buddy lists."

But Oppenheim said this was false and that Aimster is much like Napster. Earlier Monday, Napster was denied its request for a rehearing of the RIAA’s lawsuit, which resulted in a crippling injunction against the company.

The number of users using Napster has sharply declined as the company is complying with the injunction issued on March 5, barring it from offering copyrighted songs on its service.

The world’s biggest record labels -- including Vivendi Universal’s Universal Music, Sony Music, Warner Music, EMI Group Plc and Bertelsmann AG’s BMG first sued Napster in December 1999, claiming it was a haven for copyright piracy that would cost them billions of dollars in lost music sales.

Following their victory against Napster, the labels have vigorously pursued several copyright lawsuits against other online companies, including Aimster.

But Deep is optimistic his company’s fate will be different. "It’s a whole new ball game on the east coast," Deep said on Monday. ‘‘Its a war but it’s a different war," he said.

Internet Headed for Information Monopoly

While AOL Time Warner and Microsoft appear headed in different directions in their quest to dominate the Internet, both firms are drawing similar complaints about their methods.

AOL is depending on its massive media and content cross-promotions to drive its success -- a result of its $106.2 billion merger in January -- which is a concern to a number of groups who favor open access to the Web.

"AOL and other large companies could well pose a threat to the freedom of information on the Internet," Cheryl Leanza, deputy director of the Washington, D.C.-based Media Access Project, told NewsFactor Network.

Leanza said the Internet is going the way of commercial television, with a small number of owners and a concentration of content coming from only a few places.

"There are a large number of Web sites out there, but if you look carefully they are all getting the same content from the familiar organizations," Leanza said.

Local elections and information leading up to them are chief concerns. Leanza said a survey of a large number of small-town online guides revealed that virtually all the information was coming not from the local news outlets, but from a few national companies.

The Media Access Project and other groups have been at odds with the U.S. Federal Communications Commission ever since Michael Powell took over the regulatory agency. Powell sees no problem in a smaller number of firms controlling the media.

Powell has said he believes more efficiencies can be achieved by consolidation, which helps the bottom line. Slower economic times have helped increase the rush to consolidation.

This comes as no surprise to Faye Landes, an analyst at Sanford Bernstein, who told NewsFactor that the slower economic times have favored a few of the large, well-funded companies that have been gobbling up cash-starved high-tech firms in the past few months.

"Many of the smaller companies have been ready to close their doors and were available to be bought cheaply," Landes said. "It makes perfect sense for these companies as they position themselves for an economic rebound."

Microsoft, meanwhile, has been following the time-honored path of its software success as its seeks control of the Internet with the same fierce combativeness.

The Redmond, Washington-based company is launching its Windows XP operating system on October 25th, and it will force earlier Windows users to either upgrade to the new system or pay for previously free tech support.

The Windows XP desktop system is the precursor of its .Net strategy, which the firm hopes will allow it to become the dominant player through its MSN online portal.

Already the strategy is making state attorneys general consider filing a second antitrust lawsuit. The first suit was successful, but it would appear that under the administration of President George W. Bush, the company could get off with a slap on the wrist as the decision is being reviewed by a federal court.

One of the two anti-Microsoft groups that lobbied the state attorneys general last week for another suit is called ProComp. It includes Microsoft rivals Oracle, Sun Microsystems and Netscape, a unit of AOL Time Warner.

ProComp director Mike Pettit wrote a 59-page paper criticizing Microsoft’s business practices.

"They [Microsoft] are an eight-headed beast that wants to control each and

every aspect of software and the Internet," Pettit told NewsFactor.

Besides dropping a number of free software services, Microsoft is also closing down the free e-mail newsletter service ListBot, which is favored by smaller community organizations, as it continues to push users to its paid service. The firm's List Builder will be offered to those users for $149 annually.

E-mail Ad-ons: 'It's Not Spam'

The marketing company that developed a technology that wraps advertisements into e-mails says its product isn't spam because its not violating property rights.

The marketing company behind technology that allows ISPs to intercept e-mails and wrap them in advertisements has defended its initiative, following a backlash from Internet users.

ZDNet Australia reported Friday that Reva Networks was promoting new e-mail technology that enables ISPs to wrap mail with ads before sending it on to the recipient--a concept that sparked a barrage of criticism from users already fed up with being bombarded with spam.

"The minute my ISP tries this I will no longer be their customer," one Internet user said. "There is so much advertising on the Net it's a joke. I am insulted to think that ISPs would make money out a service that is already making them money,"

"The day my ISP puts spam inside my e-mail is the day I find a new ISP," another user said, with others saying the concept is nothing more than a "hideous money-grabbing attempt at invading our privacy".

Reva Networks CEO Robert Pickup, however, says that "Admail" isn't spam and is simply a way for service providers to generate additional revenue streams in a competitive environment that's forcing them to cut costs.

"It's really incorrect to associate it [Admail] with spam," Pickup said. "This is not unsolicited e-mail."

The Coalition Against Unsolicited Bulk Email agrees: "It's not spam because it's not violating property rights," the coalition's Troy Rollo told ZDNet Australia.

"The e-mail at this point is the joint property of the ISP and the user," he explained "Because the ISP retains property rights...they have the right to send whatever they like to us."

And whilst Rollo believes that the use of Admail may cause ISPs to lose customers, "it does have the potential to take off," he admitted.

Admail will be sent with advertisements wrapped the around e-mail--down the right hand side and over the top of the message -- and as ISPs have demographic information on all their subscribers, those ads can be tailored to suit individual profiles.

"If the ad is relevant to the user--and if the user was getting some kind of return such as a discount on fees--then there's the potential for it

[Admail] to take off," Rollo said.

Reva claims that the competitive nature of the ISP arena is already forcing many to reduce pricing plans--the use of Admail simply provides them with a means to subsidise costs with advertising revenue.

Pickup said he found readers' angry responses to Admail "quite overwhelming" considering there'd been no negative feedback to a trial.

However, he concedes many may not have read the terms and conditions and realised Admail was to be included within another service, where e-mails were diverted from mobile phones to mail boxes.

Pickup says he envisages ISPs could offer users a discounted subscription plan in return for Admail or alternatively, could promote it as an "opt-out" service.

Admail may hit in-boxes within a month.

Software Can Stave Off Internet Ads

A recent column about Internet pop-up and pop-under ads triggered a wave of responses from readers. There seems to be a consensus that the ads are at an annoyance level somewhere between mosquitos and body lice.

One common suggestion from readers is to make the ads illegal. But making almost any form of speech illegal, even commercial speech, is an uphill climb on Mount First Amendment, and notifying the legions of Internet advertisers to go away might be more work than just closing the ads.

Other readers suggested free-to-download software that they say does a good umbrella job against the commercial downpour.

NoAds got a recommendation from Sheila Lennon of Providence, R.I. The software runs on Windows. NoAds detects when Internet pop-up advertisements appear, and closes them automatically. It comes pre-loaded with information to block some well-known ads, and lets the user add others. (http://www.firase.com/)

Lennon uses NoAds because it's not as aggressive as other software that she tried: ''One wouldn't let my ExciteAtHome splash screen come up, so the browser wouldn't load. Others, based on window sizes, let all sorts of nonstandard pop-ups through," she said in an e-mail.

Myron Brookshire of Melbourne, Fla., suggested The Proxomitron, a program that runs on Windows 95, 98, 98SE and Me. He says it is easy to set up, and it blocks banner ads and pop-ups. (http://spywaresucks.org/prox/)

Reader Dave Friedman wrote from Silicon Valley that he uses Naviscope.

''The software's pop-up suppression isn't perfect, but it's probably about 70 to 80 percent effective," he said in an e-mail. Naviscope is for Windows 95, 98, 98SE and Me. It's free to download. (http://www.naviscope.com)

Readers Nicholas C. Weaver of Berkeley, Calif., and Kevin MacNeil of Vancouver, British Columbia, use Webwasher, which is free for home users,

schools and public educational facilities. MacNeil points out that it offers versions for Windows, Mac OS and Linux. (http://www.webwasher.com)

Robert Grysban of Ashtabula, Ohio, reports that he has had no problems with Pop-up Stopper 2.2 for Internet Explorer. (http://www.panicware.com or http://www.download.com)

AdSubtract is also a good ad-blocker, and the SE edition of the software is free for personal use. (http://www.adsubtract.com/)

There is one point of caution. Some of the free software Web sites also offer a version that they sell. Make sure you're clicking on the right download button.

Court Sides With Freelancers in Electronic Rights Case

The United States Supreme Court, in a 7-to-2 vote, today upheld a ruling that freelance writers, photographers and artists must be paid by publishers for extra work that has been included in Internet and CD-ROM databases. The decision also means that media companies must obtain freelancers' permission before posting their work online.

The decision was a defeat for a number of leading publishers.

They were The New York Times Company; Newsday, which is owned by the Tribune Company; the Time Inc. unit of AOL Time Warner; Lexis/Nexis, a unit of the British-Dutch publishing group Reed Elsevier, and the Bell & Howell Company's University Microfilms International.

At issue was how to treat copyrighted works when technological advances changed the way information would be available in ways neither the writer nor the publication had foreseen.

The case turned on whether electronic reproduction of a newspaper or periodical constitutes a revision of the original print edition. It largely affects articles, photographs and illustrations produced a decade or so ago, before freelance contracts provided for use of their material in electronic form.

But with their loss today, publishers face the prospect of considerable financial liability for past copyright infringement.

In a statement issued after the ruling, the publisher of The Times, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., said, "Unfortunately, today's decision means that everyone loses."

He added: "The Times has lost this case and will now undertake the difficult and sad process of removing significant portions from its electronic historical archive. That is a loss for freelance writers because their articles will be removed from the historical record. Historians, scholars and the public lose because of the holes in history created by the removal of these articles from electronic issues of newspapers such as The Times,"

The federal appeals court in Manhattan ruled last year that unless the individual writers had agreed to give up their rights, the electronic copies that included their work amounted to copyright infringement. The

issue was then joined in new lawsuits filed by freelance writers against publishers around the country.

The Supreme Court appeal by The New York Times Company, Time and Newsday turned on whether the electronic versions of newspapers and magazines are simply "revisions" of the paper copies, or a new product. Under the Copyright Act of 1976, if they had been seen as revisions, the publishers would have retained their copyright in the collective work, and incurred no further obligation to freelance writers. But under today's ruling the publishers may not reuse the freelance material without paying for it.

Since the mid-1990's, however, publishers have generally required freelance authors to waive their copyright in any electronic republication. So this case, New York Times v. Tasini, No. 00-201, had little implication for current practice in the publishing industry.

Privacy Tug Of War Intensifying

Speaking during a Wednesday Webcast sponsored by Ernst & Young, Federal Trade Commissioner Mozelle Thompson said it's imperative that businesses themselves rigorously assess how and what data is collected and plainly tell consumers what they learn.

The Bush administration is leaning more toward self-regulation when it comes to consumer privacy, but consumer advocates are still pushing hard for government action.

Speaking during a Wednesday Webcast sponsored by Ernst & Young, Federal Trade Commissioner Mozelle Thompson said it's imperative that businesses themselves rigorously assess how and what data is collected and plainly tell consumers what they learn. And in case that implied threat was missed, "there are many pending privacy bills in Congress right now," he warned. With Democrats again controlling the Senate, "privacy is being put back on the front burner."

As if to underscore the point, the Center for Digital Democracy issued a study Wednesday that attacks the interactive-TV industry for using set-top boxes that can collect personally identifying information about consumers. Jeff Chester, executive director of the watchdog group, says interactive TV components that can let viewers shop, send E-mail, listen to music, and receive targeted ads from their TVs are both intrusive and manipulative.

The devices give consumers' limited notification and choice about what personal information is collected and how it's used. Says Chester, "I'm concerned that the public is not being allowed to decide whether the set-top boxes sitting in everyone's living room should be allowed to eavesdrop.

Two New Domains Debut

The first two new global top-level domains since the 1980s -- .biz and .info --- became operational on Wednesday, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers said.

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The new Internet address suffixes .biz, launched by NeuLevel Inc., and .info, operated by Afilias Ltd., will at first be used just for information, ICANN said. Internet users can apply to register addresses ending with the new names through mid-September in the first phase of the launch.

"This is an historical milestone for the Internet community and for ICANN," said ICANN President M. Stuart Lynn. ICANN, headquartered in Marina del Rey, Calif, is the organization to which the U.S. Commerce Department transferred the technical functions of the Internet. Commerce, which still has final approval on new domain names, added .biz and .info to the Internet root server system.

The two new global domains are the first of seven ICANN approved last November and the first since .com, .org, and .net were introduced. Agreements still remain to be signed for .name, .pro, .aero, .coop and .museum.

Critics say ICANN has been slow to introduce more global domains. But Lynn said, "We are responsible for ensuring long-term Internet stability and minimizing risk. ICANN’s seal of authenticity on these new TLDs guarantees they will work properly for every Internet user from wherever they are."

"We can expect that these new top level domains will pioneer the way for others to come," said Afilias President Hal Lubsen.

NeuLevel said it is now accepting .biz domain name applications from ICANN-accredited registrars and estimates applications already number in the millions.

Through Sept. 17, businesses and individuals can apply for .biz addresses from ICANN-accredited registrars. After a brief period of testing, NeuLevel will begin using NeuLevel.biz to provide .biz-related services. .Biz applications will go live on the Internet Oct. 1.

"The overwhelming response we have received clearly demonstrates the phenomenal demand for .biz,"’ said NeuLevel CEO Douglas Armentrout. Registrar partners have told him they have already collected over two million .biz applications and anticipate millions more in the next two months, he said.

NeuLevel, based in Sterling, Va., is a joint venture between Washington, D.C.,-based NeuStar Inc. and Melbourne, Australia-based Melbourne IT Ltd. The registry will accept intellectual property claims on trademarks and service marks until Aug. 6.

Afilias, comprised of 18 ICANN-accredited domain name registrars located across 10 countries, will offer a similar IP claim sunrise period for trademark holders for .info. Registration will be open to the public on Sept. 12 and go live Sept. 19.

ICANN will evaluate the performance of the seven new top-level domains as a "proof of concept," reviewing whether the operators provide adequate trademark protection and inhibit cybersquatting.

eBay Heeds Sellers’ Calls On E-mail Feature

eBay is backing away from a new e-mail recommendation service that infuriated many of its top sellers.

The San Jose, Calif.-based company will allow sellers to opt out of the service and will do more to promote auctions listed by sellers who continue to participate, the company said on one of its announcements boards Friday. The online auction giant even agreed to stop using the term "recommendations" to describe items highlighted by the new service.

eBay plans to make the changes to the recommendation service during the next several weeks, it said. eBay representatives did not return calls Monday seeking comment.

In its posting, the company said many of its members supported the new feature and said its data suggested that the feature helped to increase bidding. But the company decided to change the service after hearing from members, it said.

"We appreciate the input we have received on this issue," the company said in its posting. "The above changes are designed to address the concerns of our users while providing the community with a useful feature that enhances trading."

Sellers who criticized the service in its original form praised the change.

"It sounds like they are taking some measures to be reasonable about it," Dallas-based eBay seller Bobby Beeman said.

But Rosalinda Baldwin, who writes The Auction Guild, a newsletter for online auction users, called the revised system a "lose-lose" situation. Sellers who opt out of the recommendations will not have their auctions promoted. But those who opt in are giving eBay the green light to send spam, or unsolicited e-mail, to their bidders, she said.

"They are kind of coercing you to opt in," Baldwin said. "I think the program should be trashed completely."

eBay’s recommendation service, which began earlier this month, e-mails bidders who have lost an auction to notify them of up to eight auctions of similar items on the site. The service promotes the items for free and eBay saw the service as a way to keep bidders on the system.

But many longtime sellers complained that the service sends their customers to their competitors and it does what eBay has forbidden its members from doing: contacting losing bidders to offer them similar items.

Others complained that the notes sent to bidders were little better than spam because they are difficult for bidders to avoid and they often send erroneous results.

As part of the new changes, sellers who opt out will not have their auctions promoted to others and bidders on their auctions will not receive the recommendation e-mail. If a seller continues to participate in the program, in its email to losing bidders, eBay will include links to the seller’s auctions above any links to auctions by other sellers.

eBay’s change in direction came less than a week after one of its top sellers, Bob Miller, protested the new service by trying to auction off a special jacket eBay awarded him for having one of its highest feedback ratings. Although eBay closed the auction, his action earned Miller the attention of eBay’s top brass: On Wednesday, Miller said he met with eBay Chairman Pierre Omidyar and Chief Executive Meg Whitman.

Omidyar and Whitman did not seem to understand why sellers were so upset about the service, Miller said. But after Miller talked with them for 40 minutes, they vowed to modify the service, he said.

Miller, a Utah resident, said he is happy with the changes, but wishes that eBay had never debuted the service. He plans to opt out of the service as soon as eBay allows him to, he said.

"At least we’re not being forced into this if we don’t want to be," he said.

Despite the changes, several sellers, including Miller, criticized eBay for forcing sellers to opt out of the recommendation service, instead of allowing them to opt into it.

Ross Wright, a longtime eBay seller who lives in Thousand Oaks, Calif., and sells on eBay under a couple of different user IDs, said he plans to continue to take part in the service with some of his auctions but not with others.

Wright said he is happy eBay made the change to allow him to opt out of the service. But he is upset that the change came only after one of eBay’s top sellers complained. eBay’s reaction shows how the site is becoming more skewed toward large-scale sellers instead of small sellers like him.

"Sure they should listen to a guy like that," Wright said. "But they should listen to all their customers, especially when a large number of their client group was saying, ’No, we don’t like this.’"

Internet Sales Tax Battle Continues

Marking the latest skirmish over online tax policy, two GOP governors on Tuesday debated whether state sales taxes should be collected on e-commerce sales.

Members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law heard testimony from Michigan governor John Engler, vice chairman of the National Governors Association, and from Virginia governor James Gilmore on extending the moratorium on Internet-related taxation, also known as the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

The present ban will expire on October 21st, although it appears likely that Congress will extend the ban for another five years, Giga Information Group analyst Jim Grady told NewsFactor Network.

While neither governor opposes an extension of the moratorium, their opinions diverge on what should happen after 2006. Engler argued that as e-tailing continues to grow in popularity, the "Internet should not be a way for buyers and sellers of goods to avoid existing obligations."

But Gilmore, who also chairs the Republican National Committee, argued that the government does not have an obligation to correct the growing disparity between brick-and-mortar retailers and their e-commerce competitors.

"We do preferences as a matter of public policy all the time," Gilmore said.

Gilmore went on to say that Internet sales totaled less than 1 percent of all U.S. retail sales during 2000.

But Heather Dougherty, a retail analyst for Jupiter Media Metrix, told NewsFactor that these amounts are increasing rapidly.

Dougherty told NewsFactor that e-commerce sales are expected to account for US$2.6 billion in retail sales taxes in 2001 and $7.7 billion by 2005. And, Dougherty predicted, online sales will account for 7 percent of total tax revenue by 2006.

Grady told NewsFactor that the General Accounting Office (GAO) has estimated "that up to $12.5 billion has been lost by states due to non-collection of these taxes."

Said Grady: "As we increasingly consider the Internet as just another distribution channel, there is less reason to favor it over brick-and-mortar ones."

Grady went on to say that, despite convincing evidence, he expects most legislators to continue supporting the moratorium because it’s easier to do so and it’s politically popular.

However, he noted that the pressure is increasing not to extend the moratorium beyond 2006, a dramatic change from 1996, when few arguments were made against the moratorium.

Dougherty said that the continued controversy surrounding the issue has a lot to do with the misconception that imposition of these sales taxes constitutes new taxes. Dougherty, like Governor Engler, pointed out that these are not new taxes, a tax increase, or a tax specifically on the Internet.

Dougherty acknowledged that many legislators are nevertheless unwilling, for now, to endorse ending the moratorium for fear that they will appear as if they are endorsing new or higher taxes.

The biggest challenge facing the eventual imposition of sales taxes on e-commerce is the hodgepodge of tax laws in the 50 states. Presently, 45 states impose sales taxes while five do not, and the laws vary significantly among the 45 that do.

"The difficulty lies in getting them all to play together," Dougherty said.

Engler acknowledged that a streamlining of state sales tax laws is necessary in order for collection to work.

And Grady noted that although President Bush "has suggested that the ITFA be permanent, the obvious danger is that this environment of 45 or so different tax schemes would prove more burdensome in the long run than the taxes themselves."

Dougherty added that the Internet "is acting as a catalyst" for massive tax law reform.

QuickTime 5.0.2 Released

Apple has released an update to QuickTime. The new version, QuickTime 5.0.2, is ready for download by using the QuickTime Updater application that’s installed as part of the standard QuickTime configuration.

QuickTime is Apple’s digital streaming architecture for video, sound, animation, graphics, text, music and virtual reality.

Specific changes in QuickTime 5.0.2 have not been offered by Apple. QuickTime 5 itself sports new features like support for the Sorenson Video 3 codec, Cubic VR, Media Skins, MPEG-1 capabilities, an enhanced DV codec, enhanced AppleScript support and more.

QuickTime 5.0.2 can be downloaded for free from Apple’s Web site, though registering the software in its "Pro" version costs US$29.95. Users who bought a QuickTime 4 key prior to October 12, 2000 must pay and register again.

System requirements for QuickTime call for a PowerPC-based Mac with 32MB RAM and Mac OS 7.5.5 or higher.

Users can visit the link below to download an installer application. Alternately, users with QuickTime 5 already installed can simply run the QuickTime Updater application inside their QuickTime folder. Users who have trouble with online installations can also run a separate standalone installer.

Microsoft to Drop Smart Tags From Windows Software

Microsoft Corp. on Thursday confirmed it would drop its controversial Smart Tag technology, which directs users to Microsoft Web pages from other Internet sites, from the next version of its Windows operating system.

Smart Tags work by enabling Microsoft’s Internet Explorer Web browser to turn any word on a Web site into a link that will take the user to a Microsoft Web page.

The feature was slated to be included in the next version of Microsoft’s flagship Windows operating system, Windows XP, which is due for release in October.

But late on Wednesday Microsoft announced the feature would be excluded from the software.

‘‘We have gotten feedback in the beta process and there are some legitimate concerns that we need to address before this technology is ready to deliver on our vision of the Web for consumers," Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan told Reuters.

‘‘Because of the short amount of time before XP ships, we don’t believe we have the appropriate amount of time to incorporate this feedback and make the changes by Oct. 25," Cullinan said.

The concerns center around the fact that Smart Tag links appear on companies’ Web sites without those firms giving permission for them to be there. Moreover, the links encourage users to leave the sites and move to ones offering Microsoft services instead.

Although Cullinan stressed the Smart Tags had to be "switched on" if users wanted to access the feature, he did concede that concerns from content providers and Web sites were the reason Microsoft decided to delay including the tags in Windows XP.

Cullinan added that Microsoft intends to continue to develop Smart Tags and that it was likely a version would be included in a future release of the operating system, although he declined to give any specific timeframe.

Microsoft already has a version of its Smart Tags in its new suite of business applications, called Office XP, which went on sale in May.

Cullinan said that version of the technology differed from the tags for Windows XP because they were only included in documents and not inside Web pages.

Amazon Launches Software Licensing Unit

In a bid to tap small but lucrative business markets, Amazon.com announced Monday that it is launching a software licensing unit that it says will enable customers to save up to 20 percent off full retail pricing.

According to the e-tail giant, the venture will also enable business owners to reduce the expense and overhead costs associated with all facets of acquiring and managing media, packaging and documents.

"Open-license software sales to small and medium businesses are projected to grow to US$2 billion this year, an increase of 48 percent over last year," said Brian Birtwistle, general manager of the Amazon Software store. "By launching a volume licensing program, we’re not only meeting that demand but addressing the needs of our growing small, midsize and home business customer base."

The new service allows organizations to purchase software licenses for individual users, rather than having to buy several copies of software packages.

In addition, Amazon said that the unit will help business owners cut the cost of software upgrades by offering discounted upgrade options. Through its online software store, Amazon is offering customers product licenses for applications from a number of software makers, including Microsoft, Symantec, McAfee and Computer Associates.

Amazon said that the volume software licensing technology for its center will be provided by License Online.

Amazon’s software licensing center is the company’s latest initiative to target small business owners. Earlier this month, the e-tail heavyweight

unveiled plans to enter the wholesale market with an institutional sales program that will allow customers to make purchases on credit.

As part of the program, which is slated to be rolled out during the second half of 2001, institutions and businesses will be able to set up Amazon accounts with multiple buyers and will be able to access order histories by purchaser.

According to Amazon, professional customers, including libraries and businesses, account for roughly 42 percent of the U.S. book market. Amazon has said that it expects its institutional sales program will bring in $150 million over the next two years.

Although the company has been under heavy pressure from analysts and investors to turn a profit, Amazon tried to ease these concerns earlier this month, saying that it is on track to deliver pro forma profitability in the fourth quarter of this year and expects to be profitable on the same basis for all of 2002.

EarthLink Follows AOL With Price Increase

Evidence continues to mount that the era of the free Internet ride -- or even a cheap ride -- is coming to a costly close. Just days after Microsoft told its ListBot customers that it is shutting down the free service, EarthLink, the second-largest Internet service provider in the U.S., announced Tuesday that it is raising its access fee.

EarthLink said it is raising the monthly rate for its unlimited dial-up service from US$19.95 to $21.95. The hike will go into effect on July 2nd for new subscribers and on August 1st for existing customers, the company said.

AOL Time Warner Inc.’s AOL service, the global ISP leader, raised its unlimited dial-up rate by 9 percent last month. In addition, most free ISPs have either gone belly-up or switched to paid service.

"There are costs associated with providing services," EarthLink spokesman Dan Greenfield told NewsFactor Network. "You can’t give it away. We’re still less than AOL."

The hike will affect about 3.1 million of EarthLink’s total customer base of 4.1 million. Those not affected include the company’s broadband, Web hosting and wireless customers.

EarthLink told its customers they can select a one-year, pre-paid option for $19.95 a month, and that it would extend the old price for 90 days for customers who signed up between June 1st and June 30th.

The Atlanta, Georgia-based company said the increase, its first ever in six years of existence, was necessary for infrastructure investments, equipment upgrades, and service enhancements. Along with the price hike, the company noted, come seven extra e-mail boxes and more Web storage space.

AOL, now the most expensive of the major Internet dial-up services at $23.90 a month, announced recently that it has passed the 30 million subscriber mark. Membership has doubled in the past two-and-a-half years,

and the company has added a million subscribers in the past month alone.

Some of the increase has come as the company has extended its access to a wide range of devices other than the personal computer, such as TVs, Palm handhelds, regular and mobile phones and even pagers. Still, AOL's price hike did not have the negative impact some analysts predicted.

Greenfield said the apparent lack of negative reaction on the part of potential and existing AOL customers over the price hike was not a factor in EarthLink's decision.

"We felt it was the right time to make this adjustment," he said. "I can't speak for AOL, but we're confident this increase will not be a factor. Our customers are very loyal to us. We've maintained all along that the free model that was very popular last year and before that was not going to work."

Web surfers still have options. AT&T WorldNet, for example, charges $14.95 for 150 hours a month, and Juno and NetZero, the two remaining "free" ISPs that plan to merge later this year, still offer limited free services that are supported by heavy advertising.

Microsoft's action in cutting free services one by one is expected, as the company pursues its .Net initiative of "migrating" customers from non-paying services to paying ones. Last week, Microsoft sent e-mail to its ListBot users notifying them that the service will be shut down in August. Between 90,000 and 100,000 customers will be affected.

ListBot customers, many of whom produced small, community-based newsletters based on the service, have until August 20th to retrieve their data. Some customers were angered by the move, while others were resigned.

"It doesn't really make sense to offer free services anymore on the Internet," Ben Silverman, who produced a newsletter on the service, told reporters.

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